

Class of 2013 FRESHMAN READING PROGRAM

HOT, FLAT, AND CROWDED by THOMAS FRIEDMAN

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Freshman Reading Program

Every year Dean of Freshmen, Fred Siegel, invites the incoming class to read, reflect on and discuss a book. The selection for the class of 2013 is [Hot, Flat and Crowded](#) by [Thomas Friedman](#).

Members of the class of 2013 are invited to send their reactions about Hot, Flat and Crowded to Dean Siegel at fsiegel@gwu.edu by Friday, August 21st to be considered for a dinner with Dean Siegel and other special guests.

COOL FACTS ABOUT ENERGY

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Welcome Thomas Friedman!

Posted on **January 21, 2010** by Robin Delaloye



Pulitzer Prize-winning author Thomas Friedman will deliver a lecture and take questions from the audience about topics in his latest #1 "New York Times" bestseller, "Hot, Flat and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution — and How It Can Renew America" TONIGHT at Lisner Auditorium.

After 6 months of reading and discussing his work, now is time for 2013 to ask questions of Mr. Friedman directly.

See you tonight!

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Just Say No

Posted on **January 20, 2010** by Robin Delaloye

Today we publish the final essay in our series of the winning essays submitted to Dean of Freshmen, Fred Siegel. These freshman were selected from over 300 of their peers to attend a dinner with Dean Siegel and author, Thomas Friedman.

Our featured essay of the day is by freshman, Rebekah Yurco.



Friedman's contention that the world has a problem and is becoming more hot, flat and crowded would be more effective with a more convincing marketing strategy.

I must confess that I come from a conservative family. When I delved into the pages of fresh ideas presented by Friedman I began to debate my parents on the issues presented. I discovered that arguments presented in a manner that could definitively help people currently, with immediate results was something

that they could wrap their minds around (as described in the "First Law of Petropolitics" . p. 96). Friedman describes through tangible (and to my parents' way of thinking) logical graphs that demonstrate what has happened historically when the price of oil increases, human rights decrease. It seems the movement has the greenies onboard. If we want to get the majority of people on board to make a difference nationwide, then we will need to convince the conservatives as well. We may need to speak their

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[Freshman Reading Program](#)

language, in a more concrete fashion, to get their attention. If we as Americans want to fight for democracy, albeit human rights, it seems that we might make a palatable and convincing argument to justify the need for a new and renewable energy source so that the price of oil would be forced downward to help human rights. Who can disagree with the validity of that argument? However, when I presented the facts surrounding the CO2 emissions of belching cows to my family, they about doubled over in laughter. The idea that cows belching all over the earth could create more CO2 emissions than a "highway full of hummers" (p. 35) makes the global warming argument appear foolish and therefore less credible in the minds of conservative brethren. What are we supposed to do about belching cows? Kill all of the cows and sacrifice a large food source? All become vegetarians? It seems especially ridiculous since there have been grass-consuming, belching creatures on earth since the Stone Age. That's where he lost me.

When thinking about this argument, I envision a "Just Say No" campaign of a gas-belching cow. (See above) It seems "udderly" ridiculous (pardon the pun). I think Friedman's ideas about the price of oil and its inverse relation to human rights is genius. On the other hand, I think he could have left out the section about burping cows. I feel like arguments like that can be damaging to a worthwhile cause like global warming.

On the same contention regarding effective marketing or persuasive arguing, I am not sure why Friedman and other like-minded theorists have to call it a Green "Revolution". Words like "revolution" conjure up images of a smoky room, the Beatles' song playing in the background and a man in bellbottoms and tie-dye who hasn't washed his hair in months. The word "revolution" stirs up that image all too easily. Why can't we call it a "movement"? Movements seem to be successful historically. In the book, Friedman even compares the Green Revolution to the Civil Rights Movement, and Women's Rights Movement. Why can't the Green Revolution be a "movement" too? If we were to market the Green Revolution as the Green Movement, many might view it in a different light. Movements are moving and meaningful.

If we can work to unite political parties for the Green Movement with some simple yet important changes in marketing strategy, I am confident that the Green Movement could be both successful and memorable in our Nation's and the World's history. I really enjoyed reading a book like Friedman's. I would not have considered reading this otherwise. It really evoked some meaningful family discussions during our family holiday.

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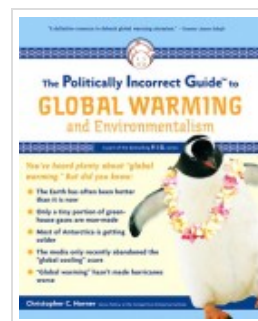
Hot, Flat and Crowded?

Posted on **January 19, 2010** by Robin Delaloye

Today we continue our series of the winning essays submitted to Dean of Freshmen, Fred Siegel. These freshman were selected from over 300 of their peers to attend a dinner with Dean Siegel and author, Thomas Friedman.

Our featured essay of the day is by freshman, Joy Welborn.

My curiosity was piqued when I learned Hot, Flat, and Crowded was to be the freshman summer reading. For all the global warming debates swirling around academic communities these days, I personally had done very little research on the subject. Therefore, I picked up the book with an open mind, prepared myself to think critically about this divisive issue, and began to read. What I found was extremely alarming-but it wasn't the environment that concerned me. Rather, I was troubled after reading Hot, Flat, and Crowded because of the distorted view and inconsistencies I saw represented there. I highly questioned Thomas Friedman's supposed global crisis and his solutions for the environment; so, to gain a well-rounded viewpoint with which to compare and contrast both sides of the issue, I also read The Politically Incorrect Guide to Global Warming by Christopher C. Horner and Climate Confusion by Roy W. Spencer. Here are my thoughts based on my compiled readings:



First, Friedman asserts that there is a “consensus” among “knowledgeable” scientists that harmful, human-made global warming is occurring. He acknowledges (in his highly simplified list stereotyping everyone opposing global warming) there is a “small minority” of scientists “who have looked at the data and concluded for different reasons that the rapid and extensive increase in greenhouse gas emissions since the Industrial Revolution is not a major threat to the planet’s livability.” Friedman accuses these scientists of muddying the issue of climate change and preventing drastic “save-the-world” action. I hugely disagree with this entire train of thought. Is “consensus” to be valued in the scientific community? After all, if a consensus was all that was needed to prove the validity of scientific theories, we would still believe the earth was flat. Just as Galileo was persecuted for his heliocentric theory, is it possible that scientists today are refraining from voicing their doubts about global warming in order to avoid being belittled in books like Hot, Flat, and Crowded? A “consensus” proves nothing because science is not a democracy.

Second, Hot, Flat, and Crowded mentioned multiple times how the earth’s surface temperature has drastically risen in the past few decades. Since it is obviously impossible to measure every area of the earth, the earth’s surface temperature is simply an average of temperatures collected from weather stations around the world. In order to understand the global-mean temperature, we must first look at where the temperatures are coming from. From 1989-1992, aka the beginning of the “hottest decade” ever, the Soviet Union was collapsing. This led to thousands of Russian measuring stations closing, as well as many other stations around the world. Because many of the closed stations were in Siberia and other cold-weather areas, the global mean temperature naturally rose. Hence, global warming!

According to graphs from the past century, global temperature is constantly shifting. The world warmed from 1895-1940, cooled from 1940-1975, warmed from 1975 to 1998, and is currently in a cooling trend, comparatively. The weather we are experiencing now is neither historically unusual nor unprecedented.

Finally, the solutions put forth by Thomas Friedman and the government are unrealistic and crippling, at best, and absolutely catastrophic for the US economy, at worst. The overall cost required to implement the “solutions” would amount to hundreds of billions of dollars. The overall effect would be *maybe* a reduction in the earth’s surface temperature of a hundredth-of-a-degree-Celsius over a period of many years. If, based on the substantial doubts I’ve briefly mentioned above, there is no cause for global warming alarm, the cost to the economy would be absolutely fatal to the US. Tighter, unbearable regulations would force businesses to move to countries such as India and China, thereby negating our attempt to reduce CO2 in the atmosphere.

It is worth noting that I agreed with a few of the points made in Thomas Friedman’s book. Yes, petrodictatorship is a problem, and we should discuss ways to decrease our dependence on foreign oil, if only for that reason. Yes, our climate is changing (though not necessarily for the worst). Climate tracking is a relatively new area of science that is constantly changing and improving. As such, we should continue to follow the findings of both sides of the debate before dismissing one side’s ideas.

Hot, Flat, and Crowded made me think about an issue that has consequences for me personally, for the United States, and for the world. After reading the book and supplemental materials, I was able to develop an informed opinion on this topic. Thank you for choosing such a thought-provoking book for the freshman 2009 read. I look forward to many more stimulating conversations in the upcoming years as a GWU student!

Today we continue our series of the winning essays submitted to Dean of Freshmen, Fred Siegel. These freshman were selected from over 300 of their peers to attend a dinner with Dean Siegel and author, Thomas Friedman.

Our featured essay of the day is by freshman, Maria Luz Beatriz Guevara Sy.



Friedman has various argumentative flaws and issues of knowledge that remain unaddressed in Hot, Flat, and Crowded. Having been very much involved in my high school's Model United Nations and Forensics, I am inclined to attack Friedman's various argumentative flaws, hidden beneath the frilly, lacy clothing that is his rhetoric.

Hot, Flat, and Crowded is *not* a serious book for serious readers. I do not mean that Hot, Flat, and

Crowded is a joke, no. Friedman, through Hot, Flat, and Crowded, is merely trying to inform his readers of the affects of an overpopulated, globalised world that is undergoing an acceleration of the global warming phenomenon—but that's just it. He's just trying to inform. More informed, more sophisticated readers would be able to see through this. Hot, Flat, and Crowded is little more than Friedman's own reflection on the world through his many travels, be it to the Amazon rainforest, Dalian, Moscow, or Doha; in other words, Hot, Flat, and Crowded is little more than a travelogue. Stories from around the world would certainly engage and convince a more uninformed, less involved reader, leading them to believe every proposal, every statistic in the book and follow through with Friedman's plans of conservation, exposition, and efficiency. That's Friedman's goal. Al Gore did the same with An Inconvenient Truth, as did President Obama in his many electoral speeches. The effectiveness of Friedman's rhetoric relies mainly on these:

- Storytelling (he tried to get away with his biodiversity argument by simply telling us a story of the Amazon and the orang-utans. The two chapters on biodiversity are just stories!)
- Personal experience
- Quotes from people on the same side of the argument
- Not providing counter-arguments
- Disregarding other issues, making everything he says complete theory, written *ceteris paribus*

In any formal debate, personal experience is deemed the least credible source, and this is the source he uses most. His statistics are also flawed. If one will notice, many of them are taken from organisations such as Conservation International and the Environmental Protection Agency. Of course they'll give these statistics—models are based on their theories, their core beliefs, and their missions. There are also many false claims to authority, citing “experts”—experts who are already on one side of the argument.

I congratulate Friedman. I really do. His rhetoric is astonishing and very convincing, which is particularly useful when you want to get movement from the bottom-up. Rhetoric inspires, empowers, engages—but does it solve? The frilly words and lofty claims seem to dissipate all doubt—if it sounds so good, it *must* work!

As thus, Friedman's book must be read with caution, otherwise we will be in for another “green party”—another case of political pretension. We don't need inspiration. We need knowledge.

Despite my irritation toward these argumentative flaws, however, that still does not answer the question as to how I feel about Friedman's book. How does the world according to Friedman, along with his proposed measures, affect me as a

Filipino-Chinese, as an international student, as a global citizen interested in international affairs? Answer: the same way I felt about his argumentative flaws—irritated.

I will not say that Friedman is wrong. He does not have Pulitzer Prizes for nothing. In fact, there are several sections that I agreed with (“dumb as we wanna be” politics, the green party, the need to become less dependent on oil) and some that I found very intriguing and enlightening (the indirect funding of al-Qaeda through oil dependence, “out-greening”). There are, however, many points in his book that I strongly disagree with.

The first would be going “all in” on the Clean Energy business. I agree that there is huge potential in the clean energy industry, and it should be developed—supported by governments and developed by the private sector. There are two issues here: one, there are no funds, and without funds, this is not feasible; two, I do not believe that clean industries should be any country’s top priority, as suggested by Friedman. Friedman suggests that funds for these industries will come from taxes on any dirty industry and from oil, as if it’s that simple. Various countries have already tried to implement huge oil tariffs, and yet Friedman’s desired outcome has not been achieved. Counter: these countries are not using these taxes to support the green industry. That brings me to my next point.

Clean industries should *not* be America’s or any other country’s top priority. Friedman’s proposals require huge investments, particularly in his proposal to restructure utilities, distribute solar panels, provide incentives for these utilities, promote the development of these enigmatic “clean electrons” (no one knows what they are, another flaw in Friedman’s argument), the mass distribution of this “Smart Black Box”, and so on. Yes, if it is in the interest of the people, go ahead and do so. My question lies in if clean energies are of so much importance that less attention must be paid to what I believe are more urgent issues. I would much rather know that my state is using its resources to end drug and human trafficking, poverty, hunger, crime, and to provide education and healthcare.

Friedman counters: these systems will provide for the poor, as the green industry will create millions and millions of new jobs. That is where the cycle starts. Green industry leads to more jobs leads to less poverty leads to more education leads to less crime...the cycle continues.

This brings me to Friedman’s biggest mistake.

Friedman is a close-minded American nationalist. How can he sing praises about globalisation when he thinks of his self-dubbed “Energy Climate Era” as a race between countries? Yes, more industry will provide more jobs and reduce poverty, but Hot, Flat, and Crowded suggests that these industries take place in two countries: America and China. How will *that* help poverty? And remember, we’re only thinking of poverty here. What about ending human trafficking and funding education? I suppose that he means that the green will create foreign investment from China and America to other countries. How will this help the country’s overall growth? It won’t. This will lead to a worldwide monopoly in the green energy industry—exploitation of labour-rich countries will definitely take place. China and America will be full of white-collar workers while 95% of Filipinos (my country is 95% impoverished!) work for their factories in sweatshop conditions, raising income in the Philippines by a tiny bit and boosting the GDP of China and America. Nope. No way. I disagree.

It seems to me that Friedman is so obsessed with America and making America “win” the race that he has forgotten a simple economic concept: the theory of comparative advantage. Friedman’s proposals suggest that absolutely everything involving the green revolution should be done in America. No, they will not consult engineers from other countries; no, they will not take the advice from businesses abroad; no, leaders will not lobby to make the green revolution work out for the rest world. Friedman wants *America* to benefit from the Energy Climate Era, to “be in the lead”, as he said. Based on the theory of comparative advantage, this is significantly more expensive and this “learning curve” take much longer to shoot up—definitely longer than 20 years. In other words, Friedman’s plan to have the Energy Climate Era take place only in America will

be extremely *inefficient*. How ironic!

Incidentally, the world will not necessarily look upon America for leadership. Friedman paints America as the world's shining beacon of hope for the next century, and all other countries look to it for direction. Maybe that's what he sees, but, in layman's terms, it was America that got us into this mess. Now they will be self-imposing themselves on China's development, as if they had a role in it. Move over, America, we'll handle it from here. At a time when humanity is threatened, humanity needs to work together. Get down from that ivory tower. Now you're one of us.

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America's Need for Eco-Education

Posted on **January 16, 2010** by Robin Delaloye

Today we continue our series of the winning essays submitted to Dean of Freshmen, Fred Siegel. These freshman were selected from over 300 of their peers to attend a dinner with Dean Siegel and author, Thomas Friedman.

Our featured essay of the day is by freshman, Dena Sholk.



In *Hot, Flat, and Crowded* Thomas Friedman illustrates, in painstaking detail, the political, economic, and environmental realities of climate change and the revolution required to “avoid the unmanageable, and manage the unavoidable.” Mr. Friedman’s solution of developing “a renewable energy ecosystem for innovation, generating, and deploying clean power, energy efficiency, resource productivity, and conservation,” is spot-on. He recognizes that economics determines the

greening of America, consumers’ dollar votes choose the most efficient and least “disruptive technologies,” and the creation of a green global marketplace will be the hallmark of the Energy-Climate Era.

There is one major obstacles to a green revolution that is not addressed in *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*, and that is that the American public is stupid. When we live in a nation that is as all-inclusive, as democratic, and as responsive to the voice of the people as the United States of America, we need the American population to be educated citizens, informed consumers, and adaptable workers in a world that is hot, flat, and crowded.

Americans are environmentally illiterate, and what little they *think they know* is probably sponsored by Americans for Balanced Energy Choices, which as Mr. Friedman points out, waged a “\$35 million campaign...to rally public support for coal-fired electricity and to fuel opposition to legislation that Congress is crafting to slow climate change” (Friedman 376). In the three-ring circus called American Mass Media, in which the Rush Limbaugh’s, the Bill O’Reilly’s, and the Oprah Winfrey’s educate Americans on the environment, there is a lot of confusing and conflicting information. When *we the people* are not educated, we easily believe false myths and outdated beliefs, are ignorant of the actions of our policy makers, and lose our ability to adapt, as a national workforce, to changes in the marketplace. According to a 2005 publication by The National Environment Education and Training Foundation (NEETF) paper, “Environmental Literacy in America,” 45 million Americans believe the ocean is a source of fresh water and 130 million Americans believe that hydropower is America’s top energy source when it constitutes 10% of the total.^[1] It is no surprise that when asked where they receive most of their news on the environment, 63% of American adults in 2001 said the TV. It is estimated that 80% of Americans subscribe to incorrect or outdated environmental myths. It is unacceptable that you can walk into almost any high school in the United States and find classes on woodshop, cooking, sewing, and home economics, but you cannot find a class on “the Arctic ice shelf,” “food security,” “water conservation,” or “energy.” Just as American students learn how to use the computer, they should learn about environmentally friendly behavior, ecosystems, climates, plant and animal species and natural processes. According to the NEETF, there is a positive

correlation between the level of environmental knowledge, and the amount of pro-environment behavior. Environmentally literate people are 10% more likely to conserve energy at home, 50% more likely to recycle, 10% more likely to purchase environmentally safe products, and 50% more likely to avoid using chemical products in garden and yard care. An individual who is more knowledgeable about the environment is more cognizant of their personal conduct, and any modification in personal behavior is likely to translate economically. According to Coyle,

A person who is well-versed on specific personal conduct knowledge is anywhere from 5% to 50% more likely to engage in related environmentally-friendly actions, based on a rough compilation of the many studies cited earlier in this chapter. Even at the lower end of this range, a 5% increase in environmental activities would yield an immediate \$75 billion improvement in saved energy, water, and reduced health care costs.

In order to institute a successful green revolution, where private companies invest in R&D and produce innovative solutions, there needs to be a \$20 billion market, according to GE's Jeffrey Immelt (Friedman 256). An educated public will favor the more efficient, cost-effective technologies. An educated public will put political pressure on members of Congress to enact legislation that provides tax incentives to jumpstart investment in solar, wind, wave, geothermal, and biomass energy. An educated public is a robust workforce- including residents of Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Tennessee- that will provide technology firms engineers and scientists. An educated public will create a lean, mean, green, money-making machine that will savor innovations in technology, thereby guaranteeing the \$20 billion green market that is so desperately needed to guide the Energy-Climate Era, in a world that is hot, flat, and crowded.

I began reading *Hot, Flat, and Crowded* on a thirteen hour plane ride to Beijing. This was my maiden voyage to China and what I discovered, is that there is one, and only one, China. And this China is tightly controlled by the Communist party. I worked for a Chinese organization, Weland International, teaching Chinese students (ages 14-17), cross-cultural communication and Model UN. One day, I asked the students to compare Grant Wood's *American Gothic* to a traditional Chinese Wall Scroll Painting by Ma Lin, and explain how each image was a manifestation of each culture's values. In *American Gothic*, the people are at the forefront of the image, thereby representing the American emphasis on the individual and the material world. In Ma Lin's painting, the atmosphere of the painting dominates the image, as the sole man is overwhelmed by the natural surroundings. This painting demonstrates the Chinese value that humans should not only live in harmony with nature, but they should not overpower the natural world. Once we established this, I asked the students, "Well if a traditional Chinese value is that humans should not overpower nature, then why does China have such a pollution problem?" As shocked as they were that I dared to ask such a question, I was even more taken aback that they all gave the same response, "China is a developing country with a large population and we need to industrialize in order to become a developed country like the United States. Once China is developed, we can worry about the environment." When I asked them if there was any way to reconcile the difference between their cultural values and improving the economy, they all said no. The reality is that China is a nation of obedient students who know only what the Communist Party tells them. Of course all 1.5 billion Chinese people fully support industrialization, because that is all they know. China, unlike America, is united.

China's government has instituted green policies, as Mr. Friedman details in Part IV, *China*, in the book. But China is, as Friedman admits quoting Elizabeth C. Economy and Kenneth Lieberman, "a veritable unstoppable growth machine." And no matter how outdated the Dirty Fuels system is, China continues to engage in an aggressive bidding war for the development of overland pipeline routes from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan into China. Friedman overlooks the fact that in 2007 China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) pledged to invest \$2.2 billion in a natural gas pipeline that would run from Turkmenistan, through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, into China.^[2] The pipeline would feed China's northwestern Xinjiang region, which recently gained international attention for

violent clashes between Muslim Uighurs and the Chinese government. If China can economically help the Uighurs, then there is no reason America cannot help re-power coal-mining towns. Furthermore, in August 2008, Turkmenistan and China signed a 30-year supply agreement for the gas that would fill the newly-constructed pipeline. CNPC is also looking at developing additional pipelines from Xinjiang Province into other areas of China. It is estimated that the total cost of the project is \$7.31 billion. China has invested a lot of money into securing its energy future. China just invested in the wrong kind of energy. Russia is also planning on building a pipeline to China. And recently, China secured an agreement with Ecuador for sixty-nine million barrels of oil over the next two years. [3]

While Americans are divided over the issue of climate change, ignorant of legislative blocks of environmentally-friendly policies, and environmentally illiterate, China is a 1.5 billion-strong financial force. Americans need to change, and unite. *Hot, Flat, and Crowded* is an eloquent and well-researched tome, but unless every person living in the United States reads it, realizes that we are in the midst of a cataclysmic crisis unprecedented in history, and acts, its meaningful message will likely fall on deaf ears.

[1] Coyle, Kevin. "Environmental Literacy in America." *The National Environmental Education & Training Foundation*. September 2005. Online. Internet. <<http://www.neefusa.org/pdf/ELR2005.pdf>> 18 August 2009.

[2] "Kazakhstan: Natural Gas." *Energy Information Administration*. February 2008. Online. Internet. <<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Kazakhstan/NaturalGas.html>> 18 August 2009.

[3] Mapstone, Naomi. "Ecuador in \$1bn Oil Deal with China." *Financial Times*. August 17, 2009. Online. Internet. <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/577ac3ca-8b61-11d1-9f50-00144feabdc0,Authorised=false.html?_i_location=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ft.com%2Fcms%2Fs%2F0%2F577ac3ca-8b61-11d1-9f50-00144feabdc0.html&_i_referer=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ft.com%2Fworld> 18 August 2009.

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[Red China and Green China: A Research on Chinese Environmental Protection](#)

Posted on **January 15, 2010** by Robin Delaloye

Today we continue our series of the winning essays submitted to Dean of Freshmen, Fred Siegel. These freshman were selected from over 300 of their peers to attend a dinner with Dean Siegel and author, Thomas Friedman.

Our featured essay of the day is by freshman, Yuxuan Shen.

□ As Thomas L. Friedman conveys in his book, the world has become hot, flat and crowded so that a green revolution is urgently needed to save our planet earth. As a result, the world's biggest developed country the USA, and the world's biggest developing country China must play the lead roles in this revolution. For me, an international student from China who has the ambition to make a change, I would like to do a research on China to explain that why we have to face such a serious environmental situation and how we can shape our future into a green age as the book described.



Talking about China, my motherland, Friedman uses a sentence in his book to describe this developing country which he considers a heavy polluted country: "Each time I go there, China's people seem to speak with greater ease and breathe with greater difficulty." This maybe true because due to the rapid development, the political system is becoming more and more mature and systematic. People in China today enjoy more freedom to express their own ideas. However, another effect the rapid developing left to us is the problem of

pollution. Our environment has become worse and worse, though we have already started to protect our environment. Many western people including the author are confusing about that why China chose a way it can't afford as West did: grow now, clean up later and why China keeps developing like a bus in a movie Speed. I believe there is one thing we have to be clear and three major reasons that we must mention.

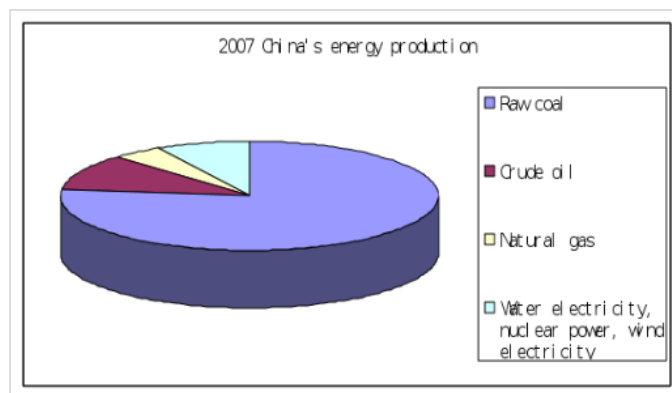
The one thing I first want to make it explained is that the western countries developed when the world is clean; energy forms were simple such as coal and wood. Moreover, only a few machines consumed energy and not so many people owned vehicles that release black tail gas. Only several countries were developing and polluting the world. So that the pollution was not heavy and easy to be cleaned up. But now things change, many forms of pollution appear and the whole world is developing everyone is now producing waste. Although we try to grow now, clean up later we can't. We may develop with the high cost of our environment, but we must clean up not only our waste but also those from other countries. This is true but we don't want to use this as an excuse in order to escape our obligation. After all, we also have to save our planet for the next generation. The reason why I want to make it as the first thing I want to mention is that I hope the green revolution is just a revolution intended to save the mother earth, getting every country involved, instead of criticizes in ideological forms, We should view this revolution as an urgent project to save the earth, not a violent battle.

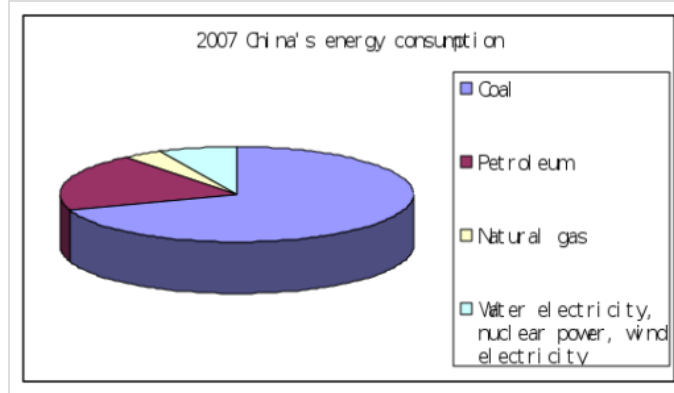
After that, I want to start talking about three reasons that make China's environmental protection so hard to accomplish. As a developing country in the world, we need to develop. Someone may view this as an excuse, but to me, I must say it is a true and urgent need. China has a long history which full of wars and unfair aggresses, a unique political system and the largest population in the world. In the 5000 years, China was once the richest country, but due to the ambitious distends carried out by other countries and the démodé Confucianism ideas, China lost a great chance to shape the world and to earn a leading position in the world. After 1840, China began as a semi colonial and semi feudal society, making China become poor and miss the chance to take part in Industrial Revolutions. China was invaded when today's world was being shaped. Unlike the USA, it was ruled by the westerns when the developing of the modern society just began. After World War One and World War Two, Chinese start to keep developing at a high speed as our goal like our leader said before: "Go all out for economic development" because Chinese know that falling behind must be beaten and with out tremendous economic strength we even can't keep our freedom. So we need to develop so fast. Also our political system determines that we need to develop. Because we are socialism and today there are just a few countries that are socialism. We are sometimes misunderstood by western countries because they have no idea about this system. As a result we must face a lot of questions and reproaches resulted from ignorant. In order to stride over the obstacle between the countries and gain the international recognition, we Chinese have to develop and show openness to the outside world so that we can be known by the world in today's globalization. Also we have to meet the goal that socialism required. The third reason is there are 1.3 billion people in our country. Although we don't want to just be GDPisms, we have to. If we don't do that, how can everyone in China survive? The basic human right is the right to survive, without this, no one can talk about other rights. And these are the reasons that we are GDPisms and we must be GDPisms. We shouldn't view a developing country from the developed country's perspective. We both want to save the earth. We all should know the concrete problem should be analyzed properly and we shouldn't use environmental issues to attack each other's political system.

The second point I want to mention is the education problems. Due to two reasons education affects China's environmental protection a lot. On the one hand, provinces full of natural energy are usually provinces with low high standard education rate so people can't change their resources into money so that they live on a live which live on what can be got locally. And also these cities always locate in the western side of China where usually full of desert. So due to the historical and geographical reasons, those areas which especially need environmental protection techniques live people with low education level

live on primitive grazing lives and know nothing about environmental protection, lacking of high quality technical talented people. Many people there know nothing about environmental protection not because they don't want to but due to the lack of scientific spirit and the global awareness. And the worst thing is some species they raise, like a kind of goat produces cashmere sweater even eat up grass root which make profit but destroy the nature. So we have to face loss of soil and water and desertification. On the other hand, the education system in China which needs to be improved also result in the ignorance of environmental protection. Because in my opinion, a green revolution not only requires scientific awareness, but also needs high humanity spirit—a sense of responsibility, also basic political knowledge is needed but these things are just the weak point of most Chinese because as a developing country with a high industrialize speed, most Chinese view subjects belong to liberal arts as unnecessary courses. Moreover Chinese students decide their major too early, when they just enter senior high, they must choose to study liberal arts or science and the fact is due to the traditional idea and the need of our society most students choose science and most of them choose to study physics and chemistry only apart of them choose biology. And beside their major classes, they just have to study others except Chinese, math and English for just two years and after that they will properly never learn anything related to those subjects during their lifetime so they just stay in one area and this of course make them lack of both scientific knowledge and the scenes of social responsibility. Take my school as an example. There are 12 classes in my grade and two of them are students major in political science and history, one of them major in geography and history, one of them major in biology and physics and rest of the classes—8classes major in physics and chemistry —which most be used for industrial development. So as a result, more and more students with high pollution produce knowledge but low humanity spirit and take no care about global issues including environmental protection go into factories. This is the cause of our environmental pollution in many modern cities. The truth is today in China where college entrance rate and degree acquisition rate are pretty high the industrial pollution is also pretty terrible. And this is also the fact happens on our leaders who are pretty good now but also only major in one science area when they were young. As a result, with so many people ignore this problem, we Chinese cared little about environment in the past but now this changes and need to be changed totally.

And last but not least, the market shows us to a wrong direction. As the law of value shows that the relationship between supply and demand can affect price. Today as we have a high standard of living, the expedition of cities and image of modern lives are the catalysts to China's car market. This result in more and more people own cars which cause a dramatic rise in patron need. In addition, industrialize requires more energy which most are unrenewable energy like patron and coal. So the consumer demand for unrenewable energy appears a rocket rise. In order to appeal to the market need and achieve the goal of economic—profit, producers won't take new energy forms into consideration. There are two pictures show the energy produce and use situation in China during the year 2007.





And we can see what the market need most are coal and petroleum. So can our environment become better?

The truth is, technology won't develop by itself, it only develop when it is needed. If no one need clean power and no agency hire workers to produce it, we will never have new, renewable and clean power to use. This is a universal truth not only in China but also in the USA.

So because these three reasons, China now faces with a serious environment situation, what can we do?

To solve this problem, I believe both individuals and government should work on it. And the solving method should first start with individuals' improvement. As the society is formed by individuals, if we hope to solve a social problem, we must call for everyone's effort because society is just an abstract idea but we have subjective initiative. So we have to raise people's concern, the best way is to level up everyone's education standard especially we need to change our education system. Students must be required to learn both liberal arts and science. The subjects in my opinion maybe Chinese (students should also be required to read articles about the beauty of the nature, the serious environmental situation now and also some science fictions on the consequence if people keep destroying nature) math, English (books should choose texts on how other countries fight for a green tomorrow to make students aware this is a global issue and everyone is working towards one goal), geography (to teach students learn about our planet and appreciate it), biology (so that students know that every specie on earth has equal right to live together), chemistry (students will be shock by the enormous bad consequences bring by industrialize), political science (students can learn about how to protect our right of survive). Also I believe Chinese schools should have a class to equip students with global awareness and humanism spirit for example when I was young, in my primary school there was a club named "Hand in Hand-Earth Village" and we learn the global environmental issues and developed world wide sight so today I become a student care about environmental protection. I really believe the education in our childhood can change a lot so education is important. For government, it should build universities to produce specialists in different environmental protection areas in different provinces. For example, in Gansu province, universities should have classes on how to prevent soil erosion and reduce desertification. In Shanxi province, students should learn how to reduce acid rain.

Second, China should continue on planned parenthood project. For three reasons. Firstly, less people consume less energy and produce less waste. Second less people need less jobs so that many illegal factories can be closed which will be a great thing to our nature. Thirdly high education rate will rise and China can change the situation as a developing country and at that time we can really start to clean.

Third, the government should control the market need. Not control all things but for our future, government should use its ability to control the market needs for unrenewable energy and waste produce and encourage new clean power because if government doesn't do something no one can do.

But to me, not only in China but also in the USA the first step to start a green revolution is not produce clean energy or hire scientists to study solar energy,

what we should do first is to raise people's awareness of crisis. Why we don't start a green revolution now? This is because we don't feel that we have the responsibility to do that. People are animals so they do things mostly from there natural abilities. Even the ones with high science and humanity accomplishment, even the ones live in the developed countries, their actions are still around themselves. We can't say this is selfish because this is an instinct so the consequence is this generation will not start to save our earth only if they see the crisis and are threatened by the pollution they create and to think for the next generation is just a slogan. We are this kind of animals. So as we have this weak point and a little bit selfish I believe the first thing to do to save our earth is to make people know we are facing with massive, dangerous and can't be neglected problem. We have too many Disney land to make us happy but we need some amusement parks which can give people the experience of the effect of destroying our environment. And we also need movies like The Day After Tomorrow and books on the crisis we are faced with. So that we can create a atmosphere that everyone knows we have responsibilities to save the earth and really start to save it.

All in all we must take action now and create a new, clean and green tomorrow or we may cry for the lost.

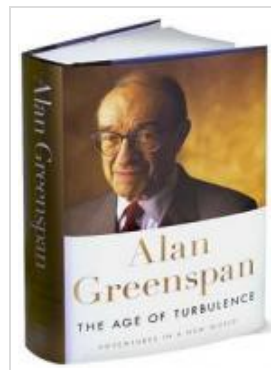
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Clichéd, Biased, and Dirty

Posted on **January 14, 2010** by Robin Delaloye

Today we continue our series of the winning essays submitted to Dean of Freshmen, Fred Siegel. These freshman were selected from over 300 of their peers to attend a dinner with Dean Siegel and author, Thomas Friedman.

Our featured essay of the day is by freshman, Samantha Rogers.



I will freely admit that my view of Thomas L. Friedman's book, "Hot, Flat, and Crowded", would have been much higher if I had not read Allen Greenspan's autobiography, "The Age of Turbulence", directly beforehand. The two books only converged on one topic, the role of the Federal government in the private sector, but Greenspan set my expectation for how a persuasive book should be written and Friedman's book failed to live up to that higher standard. To put it simply, and I will expand on each subject further on, Greenspan has made me insist on two things for every book that wishes to

convince me: solemnity and facts.

Let me begin with Solemnity. The word Solemnity tends to incur visions of old men in robes who send hard stares at anyone who disturbs the formality of their proceedings even by anything as mere as a cough. This is not what I mean by the word. When I say a book must have solemnity, I mean they must take others seriously. They can tell funny stories and rib the audience all they want, but they cannot belittle their opponents with charged language and superior attitudes. No matter how stupid the author may feel those on the opposite side of the debate are, they must either ignore the opposing opinion altogether or address it seriously with facts, or logic if there are no facts, on why that particular opinion is not valid. Ridiculing them, even with facts, is not an option.

Friedman's book did not possess this solemnity. Throughout the book he would take the easy way out, calling others fools rather than honestly explaining why he disagreed with them and why you should too. In chapter 4, page 101, Friedman paints all those who do not consider going green important with a wide brush. Lumping them in with a single 'or' to the former vice president's, in Friedman's own words, "sneered" statement that green is a personal value. This does not confront his opponent's stand; instead it is a fallacy of guilt by association. An attempt, to move in the reader's mind people who don't want to go green from being a reasonable opposition, to hate worthy enemies attached at

the hip with somebody the reader already despises. I, though, have no problem with the former vice president, Dick Cheney. I rather like the guy. Due to this, it could be argued that I'm just objecting to his portrayal of someone I like, and if it had been someone that I disliked everything would have been fine. This is not true, I am against all his attempts to portray his opponents badly instead of debating them, even when I personally agree with his portrayal of them. In chapter 4, page 81, Friedman wrote,

"Islam has always been practiced in a variety of forms. In the modern era, some are more embracing of modernity, reinterpretation of the Koran, and tolerance of other faiths—like Sufi Islam or the urban centered, populist Islam still found in Cairo, Istanbul, Casablanca, Baghdad, and Damascus. Some strands, like the Salafiyyah movement in Islam—followed by the Wahhabi ruling family of Saudi Arabia and by al-Qaeda—believe Islam should be returned to its purest roots and austere "desert Islam" supposedly practiced in the time of the Prophet Muhammad. It is a version of Islam than never fully embraced modernity because its roots were premodern and it never aspired to evolve."

I whole heartedly agree with this assessment of the Salafiyyah. I can only hope that this particular branch of Islam will die off soon, but that does not forgive Friedman for his portrayal of them in his non-propaganda literature. He starts out their description by leading the reader straight into another fallacy of guilt by association, linking the Salafiyyah to al-Qaeda, a group the reader already hates. The common thought process is that it is okay to make them look bad. We hate the Salafiyyah, their teachings led to 9/11, but this is a fallacy that must be avoided for a reason. Even though it is true that al-Qaeda does follow Salafiyyah, Friedman provides no proof or even a direct statement saying that al-Qaeda commits its crimes because of one of the Salafiyyah teachings, leaving the audience to make the author's intended connection by themselves. If left unchecked this type of fallacy can lead to terrible hate crimes. Just look at this entirely true statement and consider what would happen if it was inside a book like Friedman's: "Islam, a religion followed by al-Qaeda, states that the Prophet Muhammad was sent by Allah." It would be easy for a Sufi Islamist, or one of the other Muslims labeled modern by Friedman, to end up dead if such a statement came to an easily impressionable mind through a trusted book. Friedman's next insult is not nearly as grave but is still out of place in a civilized debate. Friedman directly calls the Salafiyyah premoderns that do not wish to evolve. This statement directs the reader to feel superior to the Salafiyyah and to ignore everything they stand for as unevolved without ever giving them a factual reason to do so—an inappropriate tactic at best.

Facts are more complicated than solemnity, as the author must meet multiple requirements in order to meet the standard of a well written persuasive book. This starts with the need to provide facts for all statements outside of common knowledge. Like a psychology research paper any assertion made by the author of a persuasive book is in question by those in the audience who do not already agree with the book's premise, the ones the book seeks to convince, and until some evidence is provided to back up the author's claim they will remain so. The only exceptions are those statements which are common knowledge to the author's targeted audience. For example, a book targeted towards Americans saying George Washington was the first president of the U.S.A. and Texas is one of its fifty states, such statements are unquestionable and can be reasonably assumed to already be known by the audience. Saying how much corn is produced in Iowa every year to the same target audience, however, must be sourced, as the answer can change depending on how it is measured and the reader has no reason to know this fact already. The next requirement is that the author provides credible sources for their facts. The first rule taught in debate is that one's sources must be from an unbiased source or you must review the collecting process yourself to ascertain fairness, preferably the former, if the facts gleaned from these sources are to be taken as truth. This applies to the persuasive book as well. Quoting People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals on how many animals are abused every year without first reviewing their evidence collecting process does not make a reliable fact. The same applies for those who seek to prove homeschooling the superior form of education by

quoting the Homeschool Defense League without first checking what they consider a 'good education'. If an author wishes to use either one as a source, they must first check the method used to retrieve and calculate the data and then inform the reader of the method. The final requirement is for the author to use the facts honestly. This is simply an ethical issue. It is wrong to mislead readers by juggling facts and definitions to give a false impression to the reader of what the facts are saying. An example would be using the lowest possible oil pumping rate when quoting how long it will take to retrieve oil from ANWR, then using the highest possible oil pumping rate when calculating how long it will be until the reserve runs dry. Both numbers are possibilities and technically correct in how they predict oil production from ANWR, but the use of two different numbers for the calculations, followed by placing them side by side in a paper gives a false impression to the reader of the facts surrounding ANWR.

Sadly Friedman does not follow these three rules in his work. In chapter 3, page 54 Friedman skips over the first rule when he speaks about two newly emerging cities in China, Doha and Dalian,

"I'm glad that many people in the United States and Europe have switched from incandescent lightbulbs to long-lasting compact fluorescent lightbulbs in their homes. That has saved a lot of kilowatts of energy. But the recent growth in Doha and Dalian just ate all those energy savings for breakfast. I'm glad that many people are buying hybrid cars. But Doha and Dalian devoured all those gasoline savings before noon. I'm glad that the U.S. Congress decided to boost U.S. mileage-per-gallon requirements up to European levels by 2020. But Doha and Dalian will have those energy savings for lunch—maybe just as the first course. I'm glad that solar and wind power are "soaring" toward 2 percent of U.S. energy generation, but Doha and Dalian will guzzle all those clean electrons for dinner. I am thrilled that people are now doing the "twenty green things" to save energy suggested by their favorite American magazine. But Doha and Dalian will snack on all those good intentions like popcorn before bedtime."

Friedman's high concentration of euphemisms instead of facts puts his claim of Doha and Dalian's future energy consumption on shaky ground. When will the two cities overcome all the mentioned American energy savings? Are the overcome energy savings just for this year's or will it be an ongoing thing? How much energy are we actually talking about? What does Friedman have to hide? These are all valid questions raised by Friedman's lack of evidence. I am not calling Friedman a liar. Doha and Dalian may overcome all of America's energy savings for the next two years tomorrow for all that I know. But that's just it, I don't know, and I have no way of judging. Unless Friedman lets me know what he is working with when he made his allegory, I cannot tell whether there is any truth to what he says without relying on blind trust or outside research-neither of which should be required from a reader of a persuasive book. It must be understood, I am not saying that Friedman should have to throw out this paragraph to satisfy me. All he really needs to do is put a little footnote after the passage that corresponds to the relevant information in the back of the book, just enough to let me know that he is not making this up or basing it on anecdotal evidence.

Even when he does provide the facts and their sources, problems arise. In attempts to get the best sounding evidence for his case, Friedman sometimes forgets that your facts must also be from a nonbiased source if they are to be taken as truth. In chapter 13, page 315, Friedman quotes the Ecological Society of America (ESA) in stating that, "Biologic, health, and economic data indicate that children who connect with nature perform better in school, have higher SAT scores, exhibit fewer behavioral challenges, and experience fewer attention deficit disorders". I'll ignore the lack of a definition for the word 'connection' and that the results probably have more to do with correlative instead of causative evidence, in favor of pointing out that the ESA finding that there are scholastic benefits to sending your children outside should have sounded warning bells when Friedman was researching. I have no experience with the ESA, but a general rule of thumb is that any organization dedicated to a cause cannot be trusted to provide evidence for their field. If for no other reason than their

willingness to believe all that advances the cause they have dedicated their lives to. This is not a slight but part of human nature, as aptly demonstrated in the recent presidential election, where many Hillary/McCain supporters, entirely reasonable people, were willing to believe Obama was a Muslim terrorist based on nothing more than a middle name.

Finally, and worst of all, Friedman did not play fairly with all the facts in his book. In chapter 6, page 152, Friedman reminds the reader that no animal in "nature" relies on humankind for their survival, but we rely on animals in nature for ours, so we better protect the natural world. This is playing fast and loose with the correct definition of natural in order to summon a completely false view of the world into the reader's mind. It is correct that no animal in nature relies solely upon humankind, though there would be a lot of hungry squirrels if we were to die, but this is due to the definition of animals in nature, not humankind's uselessness in the food chain. Any animal that relies solely on humankind is removed from the category of natural and put into the category of unnatural or domesticated. A domesticated sheep and a natural wolf only differ as animals in what they must rely upon to survive. The sheep depends upon man to feed it and defend it while the wolf must depend on herbivores for food and other wolves for defense. This is why there is such a problem with Friedman saying that no animal 'in nature' relies upon humankind, because the second an animal must take food from a human to continue living it is no longer an animal 'in nature' but a domesticated animal. It is a catch twenty two, where humans can by definition never be important to animals 'in nature'. Making it wrong for Friedman to use these words to justify going green, as it only works on those readers who do not realize the implications of his choice in wording. In essence, he is taking advantage of the reader's ignorance to further his goal. This is unethical and never ever should appear in a book of Friedman's standing.

With all that said, some have told me that I am misjudging Friedman's book, that it is meant to convince people, and people are more easily convinced by the charged writing style of Friedman than the fact intensive work of Greenspan. This is unacceptable. Friedman's work distributes throughout America as a factual work on how a highly successful author addresses global warming. This college even set his book as an example of how its incoming freshman should persuade others of their opinions in written format. To give my approval for such a book, even if it does complete the goal of convincing its readers, is something I just cannot do. Therefore, because complaining without offering a solution is looked down upon in our society, I instead offer "The Age of Turbulence", by Allen Greenspan, as an alternative reading option for persuasive writing without the use of guilt by association, name calling, left out facts, biased sources, or misrepresentations of facts.

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President Schumpp Passes Major Environmental Bill

Posted on **January 11, 2010** by Robin Delaloye

Today we continue our series of the winning essays submitted to Dean of Freshmen, Fred Siegel. These freshman were selected from over 300 of their peers to attend a dinner with Dean Siegel and author, Thomas Friedman.

Our featured essay of the day is by freshman, Michael Schumpp.

Upon reading Hot, Flat, and Crowded by Thomas L. Friedman, I pondered a quote that my economics teacher told the class by Business Week's William Ruckelshaus, "Nature provides a free lunch, but only if we control our appetites" (Business Week, June 18, 1990). Prior to opening this book that has now changed my outlook in one short week; I always assumed that everything in nature was accessible, exploitable, and infinite. I never truly comprehended that the edificial trees that sway so peacefully against the



summer sky, actually serve a dual cooling purpose, protecting the front of my home from the sun's direct heat. The rivers that I enjoyed gazing upon along the 8 mile bike path that stretches the entirety of my community, were actually the residences of suffering fish and increasing levels of hazardous pollutants. The seemingly pristine air that I so desperately gasped for after a strenuous run, was actually engulfed by layers upon layers of dangerous CO₂, whose chemical components were neither beneficial to the Earth's sustenance nor to my otherwise healthy lungs.

I've always possessed an innate desire to one day aspire to become the President of the United States. One may classify this goal as naïve or armature, yet, I believe that it is one of great conviction and courage. Embarking on the laborious journey to become the nation's leader and world's commander-in-chief is not a facile undertaking. While reading this book the headlines became vivid in my mind "President Schumpp passes major environmental bill...20 years in the making." It is a sad fact that the United States, the supposed "leader of the free world," is unable or unwilling to pass much needed and well-thought out legislation within a timely manner. The thought of beginning a project centered on alternative energy such as wind, which SoCalEd tried to bring to the greater Los Angeles area, is a process that will take 11 years! That is 9 years wasted scrambling to obtain permits for a job that takes two to three years to initiate and complete. It is no wonder why companies, such as First Solar Inc., looked to Germany and the European Union when trying to launch their company, after several failed attempts to acquire the necessary funding, here, in their home nation of the United States. It is unfathomable as to why the U.S. Congress, in recent years, has not made measurable leaps at combating the climate change crisis. Furthermore, it is baffling that with nation facing great hardship, especially with the economy in shambles, that the elected officials would not be trying feverously to pass legislation that would open up the opportunities that this Energy Climate Era has bestowed upon us. As in the 1990s with Clinton, IT was launched and the entire economy boomed, so why not now when we are in the worst recession since the Great Depression, do we not open a new sector of the economy; renewable energy creation. This would create demand for workers, which would in turn lead to a decrease in unemployment, causing higher disposable income levels, increasing consumption, and therefore leading to an overall betterment in real Gross Domestic Product. Why not start it now, with all the resources necessary in our backyard? Don't we as a nation want to restore our image of prosperity and opportunity worldwide?

Prince Salman, of Saudi Arabia, states that there is still time for the U.S. to regain a favorable rating once again, and it lies in leading a global climate change combative. We as a nation and as a people need to be "better" than our elected leaders. We need to outsmart them, surprise them, and show them that when it comes to defeating something that we know is right, the American citizens will do almost anything. I agree with Friedman; there has to be motivation, passion, and excitement, as there was during the Civil Rights Movement; a sense of purpose. I additionally believe that creating a market for renewable energy is well overdue, and if it is not created soon, our hopes of maintaining a world-renowned economy will fall short to developing nations, such as China and India. Despite the aforementioned point, the population is expected to increase by 2.5 billion people by 2050, with developing nations experiencing the largest increases, therefore causing nations such as India, or China, to be unable to sustain such growth. The striking part of this statistic is that the increase in the world's population is approximately equal to the number of people who inhabited the earth when my mother was born just 50 years ago! This widespread growth will lead to the emergence of 300 more cities, which in my mind adds up to 300 more tourist destinations, 300 more areas for carbon emissions to harm the earth, 300 more places that biodiversity is now destroyed, and 300 more air bubbles that are no longer "healthy" to consume.

However, mass urbanization is not the only issue facing the planet, technological production and circulation has also strained the environment. Every morning when I wake up I check my phone, turn on the television, and go to the computer. This has become such a necessary part of my daily routine, yet I never took my ability to use such technological resources for granted. As I

sit at this computer screen, writing this very reaction paper, it is awe-striking to realize that, due to the flattening of the world, a new Chinese citizen is opening up a laptop, while in India a little girl is jubilantly skipping after receiving her very first cell phone. This is the harsh reality that Friedman discusses because owning more technology will further exacerbate the energy and power available and expected in order to live a comfortable life. Yet, we as Americans cannot blame the developing world to want what we have enjoyed. It is not the right way to go about the situation. However, as Americans we must rise to the challenge and make technology more energy efficient, so that even though more devices are added nearly every minute, there will be that much more power waiting after all purchases are complete. In addition, I am definitely a fan of the heat. Spring and summer are my favorite seasons, and truly taking advantage of all that nature has to offer helps to provide a long anticipated sense of relaxation. Unfortunately, the Earth's temperature has risen by 1.44 degrees Fahrenheit, and prior to reading this novel that rise would not have fazed me. Yet, when placed into perspective, that increase is actually quite substantial. Now I like the heat, but if the Earth continues to sweat, then I fear that my daily runs, walks, or bike rides, will have to be done on a stationary machine in the comfort of my home, watching a green screen that gives me the illusion that I am outdoors. The biodiversity loss that traumatizes the earth daily is disheartening, due to the constant crowding, which in turn leads to a greater demand for infrastructure. Species, such as the Yangtze River dolphin that once enjoyed a safe lifestyle in China, are now extinct. The most shocking statistic is that every 20 minutes a new species goes extinct, yet what is even worse, is that we, the human race, are driving the world's longest surviving inhabitants into an abyss, unable of return. Moreover, the climate change that scientists, teachers, and individuals speak of is human based, causing higher temperatures, floods, and more extreme weather patterns, thus causing certain schools of thought, such as that natural disasters are acts of God and transforming them into realizations of human destruction.

How could we be so selfish? One American consumes enough energy for 100 people and we build Green Wal-Marts in inconvenient locales, forcing people to shop at less energy efficient stores closer to their areas of residence. Additionally, it is disappointing that the American government has told the Saudi Arabians and other Middle Eastern oil producing nations to merely "keep the pumps open, the prices low, and do not harm Israel," but allows those very governments to exploit their own people. This allowance leads to the degradation of women in Islamic nations, a disgraceful practice that becomes seemingly irrelevant in an effort to control our own interests. In an era when selflessness is integral and action is vital, the United States must set a new precedent to be followed. Developing nations such as China must strengthen their villages by bringing new technology and energy to rural families, therefore connecting these citizens to life in cities, thus causing attenuation in the crowding effect. Imagine a world of 'McMansions' and infrastructure encompassing the entire earth's surface. Soon astronauts anxious to explore the hidden wonders of the earth, the serenity, the land formations, the pristine beauty of home from afar, will unfortunately be blinded by the billions of new lights that will have resulted from an amelioration of unsafe energy planning. To offset this possibility, governments ought to join together in an effort of global innovation as well as friendly competition, creating the potential for swifter research and development. However, if the governments of the world choose to act independently, believing that their actions will lead to inconsequential ends, then their leaders and citizens must be taught a lesson in Climate Change 101. As more people choose to live lifestyles that mimic those of Americans, and grow into the "Americums," or carbon copies, of the planet, it is scary to realize that the world's consumption would reach a level that would exist if 72 billion individuals inhabited the earth's surface.

Does living in a world with increased floods, wildfires, hurricanes, natural disasters, and other bizarre weather patterns that are irreversible and potentially unmanageable sound appealing? Does partaking in deforestation, thus emitting ten years worth of CO₂ per tree, the telling your children to go out and experience the "fresh air" seem fair to a generation who may actually be better

off playing inside all day? How can we allow the destruction of the Indonesian tropical forests, which hold many of the world's endangered species, to be destroyed with modest opposition? And finally, how can we as Americans, allow energy poverty to permeate the poorest nation's people, who are forced to champion obstacles such as power outages, violent uprisings, and isolation, with little or no technology reaching to their dilapidating villages? My answer to these questions is simple. In the United States, we tend to be preoccupied by personal success, individual prosperity, and consumed by modern technology. Hardly ever do we reach for a remote to turn on the latest news channel or pick up the closest book. Instead, our nation is the sole place on earth where our adoration with personal gain spreads faster than the devastating climatic issues. Despite the atrocities that exist, there is some promising news. For instance, Denmark currently enjoys a flourishing economy, having ceased their dependence on foreign oil, allowing the sector for renewable energy to grow by 70%. In addition, the other day I found myself roaming around New York City, enjoying the beautiful weather, when I began to notice the taxi system that had been emphasized within the chapters of this book. I counted 22 hybrid vehicles in 3 blocks; a sign that cleaner air was now a priority that would one day sweep across all the world's cities, tourist destinations, and remote villages. It is people like Professor Supritna in Indonesia who has won the protection of the orangutans in the tropical forests and the young girl Suzuki who traveled all the way to Brazil to deliver a speech warning the adults of the damage they are doing by acting passive, who are truly making a difference. The military must also be commended for their efforts to "out-green" al-Qaeda, because by manufacturing more energy efficient weaponry, and altering the living quarters, less power is being exploited, as well as more lives are being salvaged that may have otherwise perished in IED explosions, had the military needed to travel further distances to obtain dirty fuels.

Upon culminating the 17 chapters that filled the emptiness between the two hard covers, I began pondering the issue that if solved would be the most monumental. Finally, I concluded that fostering our knowledge and resources in a direction that would conflict with the success of petrodictatorships and the spread of Middle Eastern oil would be our best bet. This realization is dependent on a conglomeration of issues. To begin with, our sense of national security would be strengthened since our leaders would not have to negotiate with "dictators" who are unwilling to sacrifice precious oil for cheaper prices. Additionally, ending our dependence would lead to less military casualties as well as a dwindling of enemy extremist groups. This is because groups such as al-Qaeda earn a profit from the money we spend on gaining access to Middle Eastern oil. If any candidate for public office released an ad insinuating that our enemies will continue to be funded by ordinary U.S. citizens if we do not pass renewable energy legislation, I bet that that candidate would win by a landslide. Thus, the plausible legislation would result in a diminishing demand for oil, and an augmentation in demand of alternative sources like wind or solar. The government, as Friedman suggested, could levy a tax or implement a cap and trade system on carbon emissions, therefore creating even more of a reason to steer in the opposite direction of oil usage. What person does not want a healthier nation for their children and healthier planet that would allow prosperity to continue? What U.S. citizen is willing to abandon their principle of freedom for all, just to remain quiet? I certainly am not willing to hold my tongue when it involves the suffering of Arabian women or the vanishing of freedom. Unfortunately, the First Law of Petropolitics is always in place, since when the price of oil rises, another individual is forced to sacrifice more and more of their freedom. Additionally, if the U.S. government took the time to delineate the benefits of ending foreign oil dependence, members of Congress would realize that the economies of the region would suffer immensely. Of course one should never wish for the suffering of another people, yet, this would force the Middle East to follow Lebanon, the only democratic nation in the oil-guzzling region, and embark on an effort to discover an alternative power. If Desert Islam (more extremist) began to once again transform into the older Mediterranean Islam (more modern), then secular ideas and peace talks may once again illuminate the world stage. Due to the aforementioned points, the necessity of sparking an Energy Technology Revolution is imminent because the research and development of cleaner renewable resources will ultimately lead to a new system

of power in the United States and around the world.

For too long, the Dirty Fuels System that consists of coal, oil, and natural gas, has polluted the air and biodiversity that surrounds us. This has led to negative externalities such as pollution, in which society becomes unnecessarily burdened with, and therefore must tackle, the consequences. As Friedman states, this is no longer a “green party” but rather must become a green revolution. Code Green can no longer be a phrase that sounds trendy to say nor should wearing green-inspired apparel simply be the latest fashion fad. Green must not only be defined in terms of a way of life, simply as a trend, but rather, it must be the only way of life. Green cannot fall through the cracks and be written in history books as an activist movement that failed. If we do not address these problems, there will no longer be the paper to fill the books, and the color green as we know it will cease to exist. In its place Crayola will be creating new colors such as infrastructure slate, blacktop gray, black coal smog, and petro ebony. Forget the runoff that mountains will produce, due to the melting of snow, and for that matter forget the snow. I wonder if in twenty years children will know what snowflakes are. Where will Santa be coming from, when the North Pole blends with the Arctic Ocean? The truth is “green-collar” jobs won’t just help destitute communities, but society as whole. For far too long the citizens of the United States have sat on the sidelines watching Congress debate climate change and each time pushing it off, in the “we will let our children deal with this one” attitude. Well the sorry fact is that by the time the children are old enough to deal with this, the Earth will be too hot, too flat, and too crowded, which is a risk that is too dangerous to take.

“Can Bolivia be the new Saudi Arabia?” After hearing this phrase radiating from the living room, I quickly proceeded to the television to find World News with Charlie Gibson on. He was discussing the discovery of lithium in Bolivia’s salt fields that could potentially harness the new energy required to develop the technologies needed in the Energy Climate Era. In hearing this story, I realized that Friedman’s warning was substantial and real. If the U. S. does not act quickly, then it is a conceivable belief that our economy may fall short to those of other nations, as the progression of this era is accelerated. Should this happen, our once invincible attitudes will no longer thrive, since our economy and stature will continue to plummet. The shores that immigrants once saw as golden will now be thought of as dirt-filled, our gates as closed, our innovation as primitive, our nation as developing, and our people as unwilling. However, if we work with nations such as Bolivia to provide the talent required to harness this energy, then we will be graced by our fellow world citizens, and our economy will once again flourish to unreachable heights.

Then a few days later, on a trip to the Bronx Zoo, in New York City, I proceeded to take a ride on the monorail. In past years I have been rather uninterested, riding the monorail in an effort to avoid blisters on my feet or fainting from heat exhaustion. This year, however, the feelings of self-preservation vanished, and in their place was this anxious desire that craved more knowledge. As we were escorted around the perimeters of the zoo, each animal that was pointed out was either endangered, existed only in zoos, or was not expected to thrive in the wild for too much longer. Looking around though, I realized the greatest endangered species were the *Homo sapiens*. The quote from the novel rang in my mind; “every day we look in the mirror and see an endangered species.” This was the truth. Many of these animals were our source of nourishment, or killed termites and other insects that were ruining natural forests which included the majority of the earth’s species. As a people, humans often are unaffected by inconsequential circumstances that seem irrelevant. However, greenhouse emissions and our plummeting environment are not irrelevant or inconsequential. In fact, the people of developing nations are feeling the full brunt of this climate storm. These individuals unfortunately lack the resources and equipment necessary to overcome this issue, yet they do possess the willpower and passion to tackle it. This is when world economic superpowers such as the United States and the European Union, who possess the research facilities as well as resources necessary, ought to step in, in a global effort to combat and defeat climate change. Just as in the 1700s when revolutionaries, fed up with the British tax system dumped tea into Boston’s harbor, developing

nations will be dumping American and European imports in an effort to prove their distaste with our inaction.

It may sound a bit naïve or false to say that reading this book has changed my outlook on the environment. To an extent that is true and the reason is that after culminating the 412 pages of information that every human being ought to know, the novel did more than just change my outlook. I realized that the book dug to my core interests. I did become a more learned person regarding the environment, but it evoked a passion within that was always there but lied dormant for 18 years. My friends grew tired of my constant blurbs about the novel and how we, the human race are hurting our home, and so they decided to read it with me. The discussions became intense with consensuses and disputes, yet a common agreement regarding the desperate need for action. We can change this world and begin anew; just as the primitive inhabitants millions of years ago were forced to learn the processes of eating, bathing, and shelter. Combating climate change is a science that parallels the habits of the cavemen. Unpredictable weather patterns, the extinction of species, and increased CO₂ are relatively new obstacles, but they should be no harder to solve with than it was for the caveman to learn how to first eat. Overtime innovation was applied, and now the citizens of the world consume their food using utensils. Now, we must call upon our own scientists and ask them to use innovation in creating solar panels, wind turbines, and other renewable resources. At first there is no doubt that these alternatives will be imperfect, but at least working to better our environment will be a start.

Even if I am never President or in Congress, I hope to have an important role in overcoming this energy crisis, because what the world is experiencing now is truly a crisis. Every university and high school should invest in Thomas Friedman's Hot, Flat, and Crowded, since as more individuals are informed, the more potential there is for a solution. A crisis implies that there is a lack of education and interest in solving a much sought after issue. Wearing green and placing plants in the home will no longer cut it. The only time that the world will succeed is when it realizes that we are all interdependent with one another as well as the earth around us. In this Energy Climate Era, our worst enemy is ourselves, and our greatest downfall will be our inaction. Let us not take for granted the stars that our children wish upon or the nature that our parents were able to enjoy. Let us not allow our air to be lethal and our water to be hazardous. Let us not allow our race to perish and let us not harm the species that are striving daily to coexist with us. Do we want our rivers to dry and our canyons to flood? Do we want Africa to be snow covered and the Arctic to be boiling? Do we want the sparkle in our pristine mountain tops to vanish or the white-sand coastlines to be obliterated? More importantly, do we want generations after us to long for walks in the park and a vision of the sea? Do we want in 50 years schoolchildren having to look up pictures of tigers or zebras because they cannot recall from memory the appearance of the world's animals? The answer to all of these questions is hopefully a resounding NO! And so we must act as if our lives depend on it, because they do, along with the survival of the world's biodiversity. If we must be the Re-generation, let the future civilians be the Eco-generation. No one wishes for a world that is inhospitable. The solutions to this lie not in the politics but rather in the hearts of a people hoping that their leaders will not disappoint them, and will not cause the demise of the most massive civilization ever to exist on the earth's surface. Species: Homo, Genus: sapien, Family: those willing to see the earth outlive their own existence, Order: to act now, Class: one that does not permit the existence of a divided population, Phylum: energy efficiency, Kingdom: Planet Earth, Domain: our land and seas, and Life: survival.

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Hot, Flat and Crowded: The Cinderella Complex

Posted on **January 7, 2010** by Robin Delaloye

Today we continue our series of the winning essays submitted to Dean of Freshmen, Fred Siegel. These freshman were selected from over 300 of their

Our featured essay of the day is by freshman, Preston Reynolds.



Hot, Flat, and Crowded can be separated into three parts, each with its own set of reflections. 'Hot', to me, is about the different challenges posed to a green revolution not only in the United States, but around the world. 'Flat' is what I would call a cultural globalization, which is important because this is both an obstacle and a useful tool in which we can shape the world to come. Or destroy

it. 'Crowded' is more than just over-population, yes we're projected to have close to 10 billion people living on Earth by 2050, but more importantly, where are these people going to live? Urbanization amplifies the problems of over-crowding and population growth.

As Thomas Friedman puts it, we're all here because we put ourselves here. This is undoubtedly true, but I much prefer Al Gore's analogy: When you stick a frog into hot water, it jumps right out, but if you stick a frog in lukewarm water and slowly bring it to a boil, the frog will stay in until someone pulls it out. We are the second frog, still waiting for someone to pull us out of the mess we made. We are the second scenario. Because of the global culture that we built in the last century, including our infrastructure, our way of life, our cars, and even our values, we're too reluctant to renew and rebuild in this new millennium. But just like the housing crisis and our global recession, it only takes one step to lead on to a broader change. Here is what I have to say:

Hot:

The world is a steam room with the doors left open; we're in the process of shutting, locking, and welding the door closed. Global warming is a sure fact, though we'd all love to debate the cause, the reality that it is happening is evident. Friedman suggests that America is not ready for a green revolution, that it is gradual process that takes decades of preparation and legislative concentration. I wholeheartedly disagree. I think the US is ready now more than ever to renew its values and jump into a green revolution. In fact, I firmly believe the opportunity is staring us in the face.

We're in a position of financial recovery where taxpayers hold a significant stake in many key players necessary for a green revolution. General Motors, Ford, General Electric, Chrysler, Citibank, Sallie Mae, Freddie Mac, etc. are all pieces in a chess game we're playing against adversaries of green. Many of these companies, mostly those Detroiters, are reasons behind America's oil addiction. This puts taxpayers in a very promising place, one that the current presidency has already acted upon. Obama has demanded average miles per gallon of vehicles in the United States reach a standard of 35.5 by 2016, and that these new vehicles be at least 40% cleaner (New York Times). I realize that Friedman wrote his book before these new standards were released, however, I felt it was mentionable due to his emphasis on the slashes of mpg standards in the 90's and during the Bush administration.

Obama's standards are goals that are well within reach without sacrificing the American way of life. I am no expert on the mechanics of a car nor the technicalities of an engine, but I do know that there are much higher projected standards among companies like Toyota and Honda. With the backing of taxpayer dollars and government-sponsored incentives, there is no reason why GM, Ford, and other American car-makers cannot exceed expectations.

The goal of American environmentalists is to completely eliminate US dependency on oil. Although the above policies would significantly decrease America's dependency, it would far from eliminate it. In order to gain petro-independence, we need to build a country that is primarily clean. This is a huge undertaking in infrastructure renewal and restoration. But it is doable, and profitable.

In Israel, a country whose oil dependency is not only an economic brick wall, but

also a national security threat, there is a government sponsored program to create a cheap electric car that could travel the length of the country on a single charge. This is highly unrealistic, and lawmakers and scientists realized this. So instead, the government is sponsoring the construction of 'gas stations' around the country that house batteries for these cars. The idea is that the consumer does not own the battery, rather it is property of the government and the consumer pays solely for the car itself, then if a car is low on power, the battery is simply swapped out for a fully charged one at one of these stations while the used battery is charged for the next user. In this way, the cost for the car is subsidized by the government (the high cost of electric cars is usually associated with the high cost of Li-ion based batteries, which in this case account for approx. \$10,000 of the price of the car), making it cheap for the consumer. Many argue the program stating the cost for the stations and the batteries, however, the construction of the stations and infrastructure systems would put hundreds of thousands of unemployed Israeli's to work and the quality of Li-ion systems is constantly being improved and the cost cheapened.

Obviously Israel is a much smaller country than the United States, therefore a similar program would be extremely costly. However, only a few decades after the invention of the automobile, America found itself in a depression that the America of today has come so close to reliving. One of the most praised remedies to that depression was the construction of the national highway system and government sponsored infrastructure expansion. This employed millions of Americans, giving them a consistent paycheck in a time of extreme need and unemployment. Today's America is in need. 9% of today's America is unemployed. That's 27.3 million people. Many of our highways are in need of restoration, but it's not just roads that we're looking at.

Much of the US's oil dependency and greenhouse gas emissions come from our power plants. San Diego Gas & Electric Company states that 6 percent of their energy output comes from renewable energy sources. They are 4th in the nation. Meanwhile, in countries like Norway, the environmental and energy agencies expect to be completely energy independent, with over 50% coming from renewable sources. Friedman talks about this, and makes some suggestions as to how America can get to that standard. I have my own.

Many republicans may find this absurd given our nation's current deficit, but I say sponsor and even grant funds to companies like GE specifically for research and development of renewable energy and expansion of our 'renewable infrastructure', that is power plants and facilities to process and produce renewable energy. This is nationwide, and extremely broad. States like California would take advantage of year-round sunshine, or oceanic currents to supply their power. The mid-west would utilize wind currents to generate its power. Meanwhile, like those in Israel, the 27.3 million jobless workers in the United States would receive a paycheck that could most likely push some liquidity into our solid, clogged markets. This cash flow in turn fuels our markets and our programs. And, if need be, our energy programs would be supplemented by Texas oil and cheap petroleum brought in from Canada under NAFTA.

Friedman says we are not ready for this, but we are rebuilding our country from one of the largest financial meltdowns in history, I say we take advantage of this opportunity to make a more profitable, efficient, and cleaner America. I don't doubt that the process won't end for at least a decade, but there is no reason why America cannot start now.

Flat:

In [The World is Flat](#) Thomas Friedman talks about globalization, the interdependence of nations and the intermingling of world cultures. In [Hot, Flat, and Crowded](#) Friedman discusses this in relation to a green revolution.

I spent the second semester of my senior year in high school studying the relationship between independent bloggers and the media. I feel this has huge relevance in examining the importance of cultural globalization. The world is not only flat, but if I scream loud enough, you can hear me on the other side. I found that blogging has an endless audience. I can live in south Texas, have a target audience in Toronto and still have a remarkable effect on my readers. Barack

Obama used this to his advantage in the recent election, having attracted voters and readers from around the world to his cause through his election blog. There is a very moving photograph that I saw on the Herald Tribune the day after the election that had a poor Kenyan girl with a Barack Obama pin on her raggedy shirt. She was smiling. Nothing embodies the power of our global culture to connect and motivate than citizen journalism and blogging.

One of the primary barriers to a green revolution is apathy. America is used to where we are now, so what would bring our people to change? People. There are those of us who care enough to speak out, and we have the tools to scream loud enough for the flat world's horizons to hear us. We have the power to motivate the unmotivated and check the unchecked. Word is power. Obama brought a record number of Americans to the polls in November with the power of his word. With the right voice and incentives, we can motivate the American people by expressing both the dangers of the road we're on, and the benefits of taking the right turn.

Globalization is a useful tool in other ways as well. Cuba is the closest producer of sugar cane to the United States, and it also happens to be one of the largest producers of the crop in the world. Most products in the United States that use sugar as a sweetener substitute sugar for corn syrup that is grown domestically (because of the trade embargo with Cuba). The ethanol industry that has tried to make significant growth in the United States as an alternative fuel source has been damaged because of the high price of sugar and the inefficiency of corn (When it comes to producing ethanol, sugar is both cheaper to process than corn and also produces 30% more ethanol). If the globalization principle of free trade was applied between the US and Cuba, the US would gain a number of benefits: 1. Cheaper source of sugar. 2. A surplus of food because of the extra corn growth, which would fall into the global markets, lowering the costs of corn abroad and making it easier for countries like Congo and Rwanda to feed their people. 3. A bigger ethanol industry to supplement fuel costs cheaply and effectively. Cheap fuel means more money in American pockets, which translates to a higher quality of life.

I live in California; it costs me roughly \$72 to fill my tank. I drive a Dodge Durango that claims to have an average of 15.3 mpg. Flex-fuel engines in the US usually function off 15% ethanol and 85% fuel, but have the ability to function off 85% ethanol and 15% fuel. Gas costs about \$3 a gallon in California and my tank holds roughly 24 gallons of fuel. Ethanol costs \$1.74 per gallon to produce (without Cuba's sugar cane). If I were to fill my tank with 85% ethanol and 15% gas it would cost me roughly \$45 to fill. That's a 37% decrease in fuel costs and the process is cleaner. There is no way I consider my car efficient, in fact, it's quite the clunker.

As much as globalization has the power to motivate people and drive costs of efficiency down, all the interdependency more often swings the other way. It is increasingly difficult for nations to come to agreement on economic and production standards, this creates much too much tension for scenarios like the one described above. Friedman covers this when he talks about the OPEC crisis of the 70's and America's dependency on petro-dictators. This is where I scratch my head really hard. There will be years in America's future that will be difficult as we sway away from our dependency, but the more I look at it, the more I find it necessary. We are too connected to people who are unwilling to change or give up the prowess of their commodity, but instead of leaning into them, America can see a better future. Oil is not a commodity, energy is a commodity. Oil produces energy, which is the sole reason as to why we buy it and why it has a use. Petro-dictators are a Rockefeller; the United States needs to be an Andrew Carnegie. Rockefeller believed in a horizontal monopoly, meaning to own all of a single resource. OPEC has this kind of monopoly on oil. Andrew Carnegie believed in a vertical monopoly, meaning to own the means of production for a product, and a sustainable amount of all the materials needed to create that product. For instance, if the United States owned a steel mill and they were a vertical monopoly, they would also own a coal mine to provide the coal to mold the steel and perhaps a shipping company to ship it, while the Rockefeller would simply own ALL coal mines. However, the petro-dictatorship's horizontal monopoly is completely flawed because the product they deliver has

one sole function that can be imitated by cheaper, cleaner sources. The US simply needs to abandon Rockefeller and find a new product with the same function. Carnegie's business model is the model that the United States needs to follow not only to create a stable green revolution, but to re-solidify its position as a superpower in the international arena.

Crowded:

The world is crowded. Crowded, graying, and, for the most part, poor. There are many projections as to how the world population will grow. But the consensus is that by 2050, there will be ten billion people living on earth. Most of these people will live in metropolises around the globe, and most of them will be poor. In the United States in particular, the general concern at the moment regarding population is how we, as a nation, are going to feed and support our people. Even more of a debate is if it is our responsibility. The social security program is criticized for its escalating costs and general abuse. I think some of these are legitimate accusations, but I fall on the other side of the argument; a government exists for its people. It has the responsibility to support its citizens that are in need, and frankly, those strongly outnumber the ones who abuse the power. Granted, it is not flawless but it is more necessary than it is flawed.

What can the United States do to save itself from its own growth and graying? On the note of social security, I think the program is a safety net, and should be viewed as such, if people do not need to sustain the life they had before they retired or became disabled then I believe the government should subsidize. But if they do not have the need for the benefits, why supply them? A government should be able to evaluate the needs of its citizens. Key word is needs.

In regards to over-population, I would bank on education. Much of the world's growth comes from impoverished areas, including in the United States. Lower class families are typically larger than the upper and middle classes. Given that fact, I assume much of the fault lies in the failure of our education system to bring awareness to the lower classes. Knowledge on the dangers and responsibility of parenting and pregnancy is not common knowledge, this should be corrected. Public schools in areas of America that are known for their low income rates should receive the more federal funding than those of higher income neighborhoods. The amount of funds granted to a school by federal programs should be inversely related to the quality of the institution. Disadvantaged neighborhoods should be granted more than wealthy neighborhoods. Not to say that higher income families would have to sacrifice their education for that of the lower-class, rather the government should reallocate funding from other programs to better educate our children.

In developing nations, this is a task that is both daunting and tried. However, many of the efforts in developing nations have been spear-headed by members of civil society rather than by actually nation-states who have the economic and political backing to ground a much more significant success. With that said, the interdependence of the world should be reciprocated by the international community's involvement in eliminating illiteracy and poverty.

Statistically, wealthier, educated nations have a much slower growth rate than developing nations. Eliminate poverty, the growth rate slows down significantly.

Go ahead America, it's your move:

Most of this reflection has been a series of ideas inspired by Thomas Friedman's word; most of those ideas are about what to do. America is at a crossroad that leads to many different places, many of which we can't anticipate until we are there. But in my opinion, one road we should not follow is the road we've been on. There is plenty of room to change the world, and plenty of time to do it too, but that all starts here and now, in the United States. Before we can even believe we have an obligation or a privilege to shape our world, we need to reshape our country and correct the wrongs we've made at home, to ourselves and to our world.

I didn't like Friedman's book. I think what he said is important, and I think it is

important to heed his message. But I also believe that we are a better people, and that we as Americans are ready to face challenges, even if we are veiled by an illusion of failure and ill-preparedness. We are a nation that has constantly faced adversity and impossibility, and in most cases we emerged prouder as a people, and more successful as a nation. Even in our greatest failures we have stood strong to try again and better our outcomes. We were not the first in space, but we were the first on the moon. We couldn't win the battle against communism in Southeast Asia, but we brought down a wall in a curtain made of iron. We stood in silence on a day lived in infamy, but we watched our flag wave against all odds at Normandy. We may have made mistakes in the last century that have brought us to these perils, but this is still our world, and we will not watch it burn.

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Hot, Flat, Crowded and Now Depressed

Posted on **January 4, 2010** by Robin Delaloye

Happy New Year! Today we continue our series of the winning essays submitted to Dean of Freshmen, Fred Siegel. These freshman were selected from over 300 of their peers to attend a dinner with Dean Siegel and author, Thomas Friedman.

Our featured essay of the day is by freshman, Kendra Poole.



I find only one fundamental problem with Thomas Friedman's *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*: he's right. *Hot, Flat, and Crowded* doesn't make me want to solve climate change; it makes me want to go fishing with my dad or contact a long-lost friend. It makes me want to go skydiving or scale the Great Wall. It makes me want to evade, to

avoid. The first, most prominent, and lasting message I received from Friedman's book was not "let's overcome global warming" but "global warming already overcame us." I have never before understood (on any level) the "climate change-deniers." It wasn't that I couldn't understand their illogical (not to mention discredited) "scientific" reasoning. I couldn't understand *why* they would want to live in such delusion. Now, I do. I am thoroughly impressed by the stunning, yet depressing, accuracy of Friedman's lifelong research and the structure with which he imparts his findings to readers. He initiates a tone of reliability when he begins his paragraphs with (for example) "While I was visiting Beijing in 2007..." or "One afternoon over lunch (insert prestigious political, international, or scientific figure) told me..." or quotes respected periodicals from across the globe in support of his points. Who could dream to doubt someone who travels right to the heart, artery, and lung of the problem, speaks to the world's most qualified experts regarding climate change, global politics, and global society, and reads what I'm starting to think must be every energy-related publication in existence? I don't doubt him.

I am very much intrigued by the path my own thoughts take as I read, because, if they even remotely represent an average reaction to the book, I worry much of Friedman's good intentions will be misplaced. Generally speaking, Friedman presents each component of the "hot, flat, and crowded" problem within the "How We Got Here" portion, promising to later address "How We Move Forward." As I read "How We Got Here," I find myself following a very systematic train of thought. First, Friedman presents the problem (be it small, large, or insurmountable), and one's brain automatically assesses a possible solution. In the very next sentence (for Friedman anticipated these subconscious solutions), he explains why the solution won't work with statistics, interviews, accounts of his travels, and/or science. Naturally, one devises a second most likely solution. Friedman repeats his process of dismissing each unsatisfactory or insufficient idea. This often pervades the chapter, without eventually reaching what really *is* the solution Friedman purposes. He does eventually introduce his ideas (in a very effective manner), but, in my opinion, too late.

By the time I reached chapter nine, the beginning of "How We Move Forward," I was desperately in need of some hope. I wanted Friedman to say "go buy a

Prius and Energy Star products and everything I just said will go away.” Instead, Friedman dismantles the “easy” ways to fix the environment (as there are none), continuing to explain why the solutions dreamed up by the still climatically ignorant are altogether insufficient. When Friedman quotes Chevron’s CEO David O’ Reilly explaining that even if we “shut down the whole transportation system,” we would only “reduce carbon emissions by 14 percent, globally,” I literally scribbled “I am depressed” on the book’s margin. It was at that point that I really grasped why Friedman stressed a new *system*, not just some pro-conservation, fashionably green, easy modification of what some see as the “green revolution” today. The changes we make must be so immense, so quick, and so unified in order to make even a dent on what Friedman appropriately calls the “dangerous, downward trajectory” of the world’s health. If I were a soccer mom or a high school teacher or even a state politician, I would probably have stopped reading right around then, thinking “this is a problem for the big dogs, the big dogs in Washington.”

I am so grateful to have read *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*, because it certainly promotes an investment in the world’s future, in our own future, dragging me out of blissful ignorance, no matter how appealing such aversion to the truth might appear. I can only hope, as the general public and future leaders read this realistic account of the state of the world, that its fatalistic undertones don’t endow climate change-deniers with more “followers.” As I continued “How We Move Forward,” I made an effort to find my own hope between the unfortunate statistics and predictions, and meditate on what I can do instead of the overwhelming what-I-can’t-do’s. The conclusion I am approaching mirrors Friedman’s own suggestions. I have never been overly patriotic or arrogantly American, for I favor a more international perspective on most political and social issues. I wrote earlier that the one fundamental problem with *Hot, Flat, and Crowded* was Friedman’s correct assessment of the state of the world. Let me include a subsequent thesis. The one fundamental asset to *Hot, Flat, and Crowded* is that Friedman’s right: America has to take the lead. Through the eyes of a new, politically interested student at George Washington University, a national commitment to climate change is no longer thousands of miles away. It is right down the street, and I can’t wait.

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